

REMARKS

Claims 1-8, 10-23, and 25 are pending in the application, of which claims 1 and 16 are independent.

Without conceding the examiner's objection to the abstract of the disclosure, an amendment has been made.

The applicants have amended claims 1 and 16 to include the features of claims 9 and 24, respectively, which the examiner has indicated contain allowable subject matter, and cancelled claims 9 and 24. All the other pending claims depend from claims 1 or 16, thus, the 102 rejections of claims 1-6, 11, 12, and 14-16 and the 103 rejections of claims 7, 8, 13, and 17-23 should both be withdrawn. Claims 10 and 25 depend on claims 1 and 16, respectively, and are allowable for at least the same reasons set forth above.

It is believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

Please apply any charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 5/10/04

  
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